

CHAPTER 7

Trials of the dandy: George Brummell's scandalous celebrity

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THE CHANNEL CROSSING

In 1842, Captain William Jesse undertook a field trip to Calais, 'this uninteresting place', to collect materials for his *Life of George Brummell* (1844), the first biography of the original Regency social dandy, George 'Beau' Brummell (1778–1840).¹ Recounting Brummell's famed midnight Channel crossing of 16 May 1816, when he fled London to escape debts incurred by 'deep play' at the gaming tables of Brooks's, White's, Watier's and Gordon's clubs – rushing out in the middle of an opera performance into the chaise that took him to Dover, and then to Calais – Jesse compares the circumstances of his own trip, almost thirty years later: 'In much less haste, and happily with a very different object in view ... I took my departure for France in the spring of 1842. Calais lay there in my route, and, in the few days I remained there, I collected the little that was remembered of the Beau's history, during his long residence in that sanctuary of English debtors' (I, 330).

Sanctuary or prison? For the first point of crossing from England to France, and the site of the original English pale, the port town of Calais had long been a negatively charged liminal site in the English national imaginary. In that defining image of eighteenth-century English patriotism, William Hogarth's engraving *Calais Gate, or the Roast Beef of Old England* (1749) (Fig. 7.1), the channel crossing is represented as a descent into prison, a kind of hell on earth. It is a prison foregrounded as a theatrical space by a stage and a kind of proscenium arch that frames the image. This iconic and inaugural image of modern English chauvinism bears witness nonetheless to a rich history of Anglo-French cultural crossing. Brummell's 1816 Channel crossing, the movement into exile that coincides with the exiles of Napoleon Bonaparte and George Gordon Byron, emplots the Regency dandy as one of the most enduring forms of modern Anglo-French cultural crossing and transnational cultural celebrity.²



Fig. 7.1 William Hogarth, *Calais Gate, or the Roast Beef of Old England* (1749).
British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings.

What transpires from Jesse's melancholy excavations in Calais is the first biography of the original Regency dandy, and the first fully individuated man of fashion.³ As such, Jesse's *Life* is an important event in the cultural history of celebrity. Nonetheless, unpublished since the early twentieth century, Jesse's *Life* has been neglected in favour of the French canon of dandy literature, in particular, Jules Barbey d'Aureville's *Anatomy of Dandyism* (1845), as well as Charles Baudelaire's 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1863), which translates the dandy as the flâneur, and Huysmans's and Proust's novelisations of the poet and decadent aesthete Robert De Montesquiou, who self-identified as 'sovereign of the transitory'.⁴ In spectacular opposition to these French romances, which consecrated the dandy as a monument of ephemeral endurance, and as an abstract ideal of masculine cosmopolitan mobility, ironic detachment, and disembodiment and transitoriness, Jesse's *Life*, in two long, rambling volumes, is unliterary, unknowing and uninitiated in what Jesse calls the 'secrets of mufiti' (I, 72), or what *not* to wear out of uniform. It is also a self-styled 'narrative of misfortunes' (II, 295). Jesse's *Life* offers an unflinching depiction of Brummell's

fall and ruination, and focuses on the immobility, hypercorporeality and abjection of Brummell's expatriated existence. Hogarth's translation of Calais Gate into a prison, and then of the prison into a stage, is proleptic, both of the career of Beau Brummell, and of the functions of celebrity culture, as dramatised in Jesse's *Life of George Brummell*. These functions involve the spectacularisation first of social heights and then of humiliation, ruination and dizzying falls; as well as the management of the ambivalent modes of affect that attend the spectacle of celebrity; swerving from identification and imitation to dis-identification and outcasting. As Jacqueline Rose has suggested, celebrity culture involves the staging of 'a ritual of public humiliation', demonstrating the 'intimate, even passionate, connection between the cult of celebrity and shame'.⁵ This essay seeks to explore these ambivalent functions of celebrity culture as a complex form of social ritual, social dramaturgy and social affect.

Calais was the site of the original pale, marking the division between social inclusion and exclusion and abjection. In this sense, Brummell's Channel crossing through Calais Gate can be understood as an exemplary instance of what the social theorist Erving Goffman has called a 'rite of passage', a form of 'ritual transition'.⁶ Understanding celebrity in part as a mode of social ritual, my essay argues that one of the diverse practices of celebrity culture is the production of narratives of ritual transition. As a narrative of transition, Jesse's *Life* stages both the passage through the Calais Gate and the dandy's 'progress', to engage another Hogarthian genre. Like the *Rake's Progress*, Jesse's 'narrative of misfortunes' stages trials of the dandy, stations of the cross on the road to spectacular abjection: self-exile in Calais, living above the shop sign *Le Pauvre Diable*; imprisonment for debt in Caen; room arrest after frightening the visitors at the *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where Brummell could check in but could never leave, until forcible removal to the Hospital of the Bon Sauveur, where he died from syphilitic dementia, in a state of sartorial, psychic and corporeal ruination, unobserved except by a sole Sister of Charity.⁷

In her study of the late Victorian dandy Oscar Wilde and his publics, Regenia Gagnier refers to Jesse's *Life* as 'a Victorian morality tale'.⁸ As I see it, Jesse's *Life* certainly marshals a range of providential genres. However, rather than a 'morality tale', I read the *Life* as a 'scandalous memoir', within the terms in which Felicity Nussbaum has defined the genre, as offering 'apologies in the classical sense of defence or justification within admission of guilt', encouraging the reader 'to respond sympathetically as judge and jury'.⁹ It is a form of trial, then, and that key word, trial, suggests both the

examination and the display of difficulty and the trials of misfortune. Jesse's *Life* functions as a scandalous memoir that seeks to engage public sympathy for Brummell, and it does so as part of an assemblage of archaic and providential genres such as the rise-and-fall narrative, the rake's progress, the prisoner's progress, the Newgate narrative and the Christian deathbed scene, with its redemptive potentialities. In this way, the scandalous memoir involves what Chris Rojek has referred to as the 'redemption bid', the 'ritualized attempt by a fallen celebrity to re-acquire positive celebrity status through confession and the request for public absolution'.¹⁰ My argument is that the genres of fashionable novel and Newgate calendar meet in Jesse's *Life of Brummell*, not simply as intertextual references, but as generic models of kinds of career, and as narrative indexes of the two ends of an ironic progress that puts embodied masculine display, pleasure and excess on the road to prison and then to Bedlam.

Calais is the sanctuary and prison of that class of shady expatriates whom Jesse refers to as 'soi-disant gentlemen delinquents' (I, 340): liminal, amphibious, cross-channel creatures. The kind of celebrity these figures enjoy is similarly ambiguous, a form of scandalous celebrity. As I have argued elsewhere, scandalous celebrity is a new form of fame that mediates between an older heroic fame and notoriety.¹¹ Scandalous celebrity conjures the affective ambivalence that informs celebrity culture. In this essay, I argue that Jesse's *Life* offers a leading example of what I call the rise-and-fall narrative, a key genre of celebrity culture that engages this specifically ambivalent form of affective identification. I wish to examine Brummell's journey from a glamorous form of scandalous celebrity to a scandalous celebrity of abjection. As scandal and celebrity are inherently social genres, Brummell's scandalous celebrity of abjection – essentially a scandal of asociality – raises constitutive questions about the limits and functions of these social genres, and offers a kind of limit-case of scandalous celebrity as a form of social capital. At stake here is an understanding of the significance and management of the dandy as a new form of masculine embodiment and corporeal display, and as a new social form of sexuality, with a capacity as much for scandalous corporeality as for fashionable glamour. As the first biography of the original dandy, and as a chronicle of a life identified with ephemeral, sensational or transitory modes of fame, notoriety and notice, Jesse's *Life* also illuminates the protocols for transforming contemporary celebrity into posthumous, textualised fame. It tracks the movement from the marvel of rising above social rank to the fall into a spectacle of rank abjection and then its afterlife. In tracing this trajectory, and the generic contours of the *Life*

as a rise-and-fall narrative, my essay is in three parts: glamour, ruination and ephemeral endurance.

GLAMOUR

Dandyism is a critical component of the so-called reform of masculine dress that emerged in the wake of the French Revolution.¹² The mode that dandyism is said to have reformed is the macaroni style, at its heights in the 1770s, and characterised by excessive face and hair powder, bag wigs and hair extensions – referred to as 'fictitious hair'¹³ – stripes, breeches, and coloured and buckled shoes. From the late 1790s, Brummell came to be associated with a new style of masculine dress. As Jesse writes, Brummell rescued and reformed masculine fashion by doing away with 'the muffs, velvets, ruffles, gold lace, and perfumed powder [that] were then the usual appendages of male attire' (I, 12), and by modelling a new order of simplicity, replacing multiple accessories with the cravat or neckcloth. For Brummell, dandyism is not just a style of dress, but a mode of embodied social performance and social effect. Brummell models a form of vocational dandyism. Dandyism is constitutive of Brummell's social identity, and 'that nicely adjusted cravat'¹⁴ is a vital accessory to his vocational dandyism, so much so that Jesse's *Life of Brummell* can also be said to offer a life of Brummell's cravat.¹⁵

In contrast to the macaronic excesses of the 1770s, Brummell's understated mode of glamour is predicated upon a set of distinctions between visibility and invisibility, display and secrecy, distinction and democracy, effeminacy and masculinity. Dandyism reconstitutes ornament as detail. Detail is the sign of distinction and singularity, but it is not – and this is where it differs from the ornament – conspicuous.¹⁶ As Jesse explains, '[Brummell's] chief aim was to avoid anything marked; one of his aphorisms being, that the severest mortification a gentleman could incur, was, to attract observation in the street by his outward appearance' (I, 59). Avoiding anything marked also meant avoiding literal marks on the clothing and the cultivation of 'extreme cleanliness': 'There was in fact nothing extreme about Brummell's personal appearance but his extreme cleanliness and neatness, and whatever time and attention he devoted to his dress, the result was perfect; no perfumes, he used to say, but very fine linen, plenty of it, and country washing' (I, 69). Indeed, Brummell's expenses to maintain these habits of 'extreme cleanliness' exceeded his means, even at the height of his reign in London and well before he incurred his massive gambling debts. Within the logic of

Brummell's vocational dandyism, cleanliness itself, then, becomes a ruinous sign and symptom of excess.

Brummell's glamour is that of the self-made man, enacting nonetheless the social prerogatives of the upper middle classes or lower service gentry. As such he was very much his father's son. Brummell's grandfather was a confectioner, and his father was secretary to the Prime Minister, Lord North, which also happened to mean that Brummell's father held spectacularly corrupt sinecures such as the 'Receiver of the Duties on Uninhabited Houses in London and Middlesex'. The distribution of sinecures functioned as an ongoing scandal of public life throughout the period of the Napoleonic Wars and Regency, a period of enormous national debt only partly ameliorated through the introduction of income tax in 1797. Brummell said of his father: 'My *father* ... was a very superior valet, and kept his place all his life.'¹⁷ Brummell, on the other hand, did not keep his place. A marvellous social confectioner, Brummell embodied, as one contemporary review of Jesse's *Life* put it, 'the art of rising', and 'saw ... nothing fit to ensure human fame with posterity but the power to create and to bequeath a new fashion'.¹⁸

When Barbey says that Brummell 'raised himself to the rank of a Thing: he became Dandyism itself',¹⁹ he is referring to this 'art of rising', to how Brummell stood in symbolic relation to the ideal of dandyism, as well as to a conscious process of self-fashioning. The Brummellian 'thing' designates a privileged but ineffable social effect. Brummell's dandyism spectacularised both this supreme social effect and also the reduction of the effect to the thinglike state of the disposable commodity. Brummell rises above rank to the 'rank of a thing' then falls to the status of 'rank thing'.

As Jesse's *Life* is divided into two volumes that roughly correspond to the trajectory of rise and fall, it is significant that the episode of Brummell's financial ruin and subsequent midnight crossing from London to Calais in 1816 is placed in Volume I, and not Volume II, which concerns Brummell's prolonged and extravagant period of ruination. This suggests that the scandal of Brummell's self-exile as a gambling debtor conformed to a logic of social power and glamorous celebrity. As Gillian Russell points out, '[h]igh-stakes gambling represented a profligacy that constantly courted ruin and disaster: it was a form of luxury that was geared not toward the display of wealth but to the display of one's insouciance in losing it'.²⁰ Gambling involves the display of risk-taking. As the social theorist Stephen Turner has argued, risk is a primary feature of the magical component of charisma and celebrity, where the celebrity figure, by appearing insouciant in the face of risk,

functions to inspire imitation and negotiate social risk.²¹ Brummell's flight from London is certainly in keeping with such modes of glamorous insouciance. As Barbey writes, Brummell left England 'like those proud coquettes who prefer to leave the loved one, rather than be left by one who loves them no more' (Barbey, *Anatomy*, p. 48). Brummell's glamour as an expatriated tourist attraction was such that he was nicknamed 'the Dowager dandy', shortly after his arrival in Calais in 1816 (when he would have been just thirty-eight).²² The nickname speaks to Brummell's condition of living off an earlier source of social credit and support, and demonstrates that the effeminising of Brummell was not merely retrospective but contemporary with him. The frontispiece from Volume I of Jesse's *Life* presents an older Brummell in Caen, but looking very much the part of a dowager dandy (Fig. 7.2).

Ironically, while Brummell's financial capital had been exhausted, his social capital was somewhat more secure. Indeed, Brummell's extraordinary reserves of social credit were converted into long-term financial support from friends such as the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Alvanley and the Duchess of York – friends who regularly helped him with bills run up at his Calais tailor, Monsieur Gaussin. In addition to the circle of personal friends who made the pilgrimage to Calais, strangers also came to visit, as Brummell became an icon of tourist pilgrimage, an attraction on the itinerary of the Channel crossing, where Calais was the natural stopover between London and Paris. To quote that famous German tourist Prince Pückler-Muskau (who Brummell referred to as 'Mouska Pouska', *Life*, II, 292), 'every bird of passage from the fashionable world dutifully pays the former patriarch the tribute of a visit, or of an invitation to dinner'.²³ Brummell could exact the spectacular kind of debt relations he did – both in London and for fourteen long years in exile in Calais – purely on the basis of the credit effected by his social power. His ability to maintain social credit survives the Channel crossing, then, but not indefinitely. Much more significant, and spectacular, than this financial ruination in Calais is the social, corporeal and psychical ruination that Brummell models in Caen, a small town in Normandy.

For all its horrors, Calais was only the prologue to Caen, purgatory to Caen's hell. As Captain Jesse says, 'Calais, being on the high-road between Paris and London, was the very place for a mendicant of his stamp – he there levied a toll on all those who had formerly travelled with him along the *chaussée* of fashionable life', but 'Caen was an outlying piquet, and never visited' (II, 62). So it could get much worse for Brummell than Calais, and it did.

RUINATION

In 1830, Brummell moved from Calais to Caen to take up the position of British Consul, a sinecure, basically, arranged by Brummell's old friend, the Duke of Wellington. After the position was abolished, owing largely to a bungled attempt by Brummell to parlay the job into a lucrative posting in Italy, Brummell was unable to pay his debts, and was eventually arrested at the Hôtel d'Angleterre in May 1835. In Calais, Brummell had experienced a fashionable exile and a fashionable aesthetic of debt. In Caen, he moved into an unfashionable exile, imprisonment for debt, ruination – to use contemporary parlance – and abjection. Here, I take Anne McClintock's eloquent definition: 'The abject is everything that the subject seeks to expunge in order to become social; it is also a symptom of the failure of this ambition ... Abjection traces the silhouette of society on the unsteady edges of the self; ... at the same time, it threatens the self with perpetual danger.'²⁴ 'Broken' or ruined is the period's term for abjection.

In *Beppo* (1818), Byron, whom Brummell had known in London, and whose work he read in exile, had described himself as 'A broken Dandy lately on my travels', travels which pass through Calais. The figure of the broken dandy is emblazoned in a visual charade and self-portrait in a sketch drawn by Brummell around 1835, and signed GB, which presents a Cupid with a caption beneath entitled 'The broken Beau', where 'Beau' has been crossed out and replaced by 'Bow!'. It is featured as the frontispiece to Volume II of Jesse's *Life* (Fig. 7.3). This striking out of the word 'Beau' is complemented visually by the figure of a weeping Cupid with pointy little claws poised to tear at his own flesh. A contemporary review referred to this heraldic frontispiece as a 'prophetic pun-picture', which neatly captures the image-text heraldic annunciation of the narrative of ruination that features in Volume II.²⁵ This visual self-representation, together with a small quantity of letters, constitutes the slender archive of autobiographical materials that remain after Brummell's death and which Jesse has collected for inclusion in *Life*. Like Byron's *Beppo*, the image-text offers a scandalous spectacle of self-representation that nonetheless complicates any simple identification of the textualised construction with authorial subject. Brummell's self-casting as 'Beau' orients the image to his public persona, even in the act of performatively cancelling this social identity. And Brummell's later reference to the caption as 'ridiculous' suggests the complex staging of shame that the image performs.²⁶

Recently, Homi Bhabha has argued that shame situates the protagonist as though he were an onlooker, and as such is directed to the future.²⁷ So, too,



Fig. 7.2 'The Dowager Dandy', in Captain Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, Esq., commonly called Beau Brummell*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Orley, 1844), frontispiece to Volume I. Collection of the Author.



Fig. 7.3 'The Broken Beau', in Captain Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell*, frontispiece to Volume II. Collection of the Author.

in a luminous discussion of the strange temporalities of social expectation, and of the corrosive effects of social stigma that accrue to subjects who fail to match up to the virtual social identities that others construct for them, Erving Goffman refers to the ways in which 'we lean on ... anticipations', suggesting how social expectations are produced in 'potential retrospect'.²⁸ Such 'potential retrospect' reminds us that shame, while intensely private, is

always in fact oriented to an audience. That such spectacles of shame can be understood as anticipatory of an audience illuminates the significance of shame as a powerful affect of celebrity culture. The image fits within an iconography of homoerotic spectacle as a kind of campy St Sebastian reframed within the sentimental topos of the Cupid. As such, it engages the tradition of the scourge, another form of trial and martyrdom, which informs the affective spectacles of celebrity culture. As Goffman points out, information about stigma 'is reflexive and embodied; that is, conveyed through bodily expression in the immediate presence of those who receive the expression'.²⁹ Spectacle functions in celebrity culture to facilitate the embodied transmission (present or virtual) of glamorous and stigmatic information. That the 'Beau' is still clearly legible behind the 'Bow!' marks the image not only with shame but also with pride and nostalgia, as does a letter to Lord Alvanley written in August 1834: '[D]enuded like a new-born infant – and what a Beau I once was!' (*Life*, II, 169). This nostalgic appeal to the former self stages a claim for sympathy. By featuring Brummell's self-representation as the Broken Beau as the frontispiece, Jesse's text recapitulates Brummell's staging of shame and nostalgic appeal as part of the scandalous memoir's redemption bid.

A key part of Jesse's 'narrative of misfortunes' and scandalous memoir recounts Brummell's time in a Caen prison, from 1835 to 1839, for debts he had incurred to his laundry-woman in order to maintain his regimen of scrupulously clean white linen. At this point, Jesse's *Life* takes on the generic contours of a prison narrative, a kind of Brummellian Newgate, mixing observations from Jesse's own tour of the prison in 1843 with excerpts from Brummell's letters, where Brummell becomes a kind of gentleman celebrity criminal (or another of the '*soi disant* gentlemen delinquents'), like his contemporary the French homosexual poet Pierre François Lacenaire, who was known as the dandy murderer. One of the prisoners who occupied the next ward was Michel Foucault's splendid archaic criminal Pierre Rivière, the triple murderer and criminal celebrity.³⁰ Referring to Rivière in the context of an ironic reference to 'our "Newgate Calendar"' (*Life*, II, 259), Brummell is clearly dazzled by what Foucault terms the 'glory of the rustic malefactor':³¹

He is a rather decent-looking reprobate, and I could not discriminate, by his countenance or manner, the least trace of compunction or shame. He seems so quiet and *insouciant* of his enormous delinquency, that I shall seek an early occasion to make him confess the whole detail of the circumstances attending his crime; for I understand he is very accessible upon the subject, and is even *proud* of relating them. God of heaven, what creatures bearing human faces and forms surround me! (*Life*, II, 259–60)

Unlike Brummell, then, and unlike the more mundane and disciplined subject of the modern prison, Rivière exhibits no shame. Brummell's reference to 'our "Newgate Calendar"' produces himself as an inmate of Newgate, as both a real criminal and a fictional character of the Newgate novel that had started to aestheticise prison life by offering fictionalised prison biographies. It also provides an unwitting postscript to Edward Bulwer Lytton's representation of Brummell in *Pelham* (1828), and to his Newgate novel *Paul Clifford* (1830), to which he added a Preface in 1840 outlining its reformist impulse 'to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz., a vicious prison-discipline, and a sanguinary Criminal Code'.³²

A primary feature of the ignominy of Brummell's prison experience is the parade of hideous physiognomies he is forced to contemplate. And it was not always possible to maintain bodily distance. For Brummell 'sometimes came in contact with them', such as when he is 'jostled with great violence' by an enormous man with 'a set of grinders like a crocodile's ... [and] started back in amazement at such a complication of ugliness and ferocity' (*Life*, II, 221). However, the horror of coming up against old Crocodile Grinders pales beside what Jesse describes as Brummell's 'greatest humiliation': the return of the gaze of these prisoners while Brummell is attempting to relieve himself at the prison latrine, or 'cloaca', as Jesse calls it. This episode exemplifies the way Jesse's narrative functions as a scandalous memoir, and employs a redemption bid on Brummell's behalf:

[T]he greatest humiliation to which [Brummell] was obliged to submit when in prison, and which not only distressed him greatly, but I verily believe contributed in a considerable degree to injure both his intellects and his health, was a circumstance that painfully interfered ... with those confirmed habits and feelings of delicacy common to every class of Englishmen. The cloaca of the prison, situated on one side of the debtors' court, was *à dessein sans clôture, tout à fait ouvert* [designed without an enclosure, quite open]; as this court was the only place of exercise for the debtors ... it was very seldom without promenaders, and several hours would sometimes elapse before a favourable opportunity could be secured of retiring there unobserved. Our neighbours (I speak of the mass) are not very susceptible on these points, the observance of which is such a prominent feature in our social habits, and which proves without a doubt, if nothing else does, our superior civilization. Brummell's companions did not, by leaving the court, make this horrible penance less disgusting to him; on the contrary, 'l'on s'étonnaient d'une retenue si singulière, qu'on attribuait à un motif de pudeur' [they wondered at such an uncommon ability to hold on, putting it down to his prudishness³³]. Such were their remarks; and the reader may judge by this what Brummell must have suffered under such circumstances. (II, 222–3)

The first scandal here is the technological scandal of the open cloaca – '*tout à fait ouvert*'. The second is the scandal of being corporeally vulnerable to an unwanted gaze, having one's intimate bodily functions, one's 'retenue', open to inspection and comment. Both are so scandalous that they have to be narrated in French. The episode offers an emblematic example of the internalisation of shame concerning bodily functions that marks the well-bred, civilised person, and the operation of the internal eye of civilisation that Norbert Elias has associated with the civilising process.³⁴ Indeed, Brummell's zealous maintenance of the eye of civilisation is used almost apotropaically to defend himself against the eyes of the men who circle the cloaca. Brummell's 'penance' – his agony in the cloaca in being unable to go – produces the 'dandiacal body', to use Thomas Carlyle's term from *Sartor Resartus*,³⁵ as a marked male body, made for display yet abjected and effeminised by anality.³⁶

In this staging of the spectacle of anality – which is in fact a spectacle of the withholding of anality – the figure of male homosexuality is a kind of recessed scandal, or structuring absence. At the time Jesse was writing, a rich paraliterature of prison ethnography, reform, criminal anthropology and criminology was emerging, and much of Brummell's language, and Jesse's, suggests a popularised form of these burgeoning discourses. A frequent topic of discussion was the unusual intensity of the male-to-male bonds that inhabited prisons: not only the violence, but also the love that sprang up in these places. As Nicholas Dobelbower suggests, it was through debate about 'the undesirable effects of the prison system that a non-aristocratic form of homosexuality came to the public's attention'.³⁷ In Jesse's narrative, the spectacle of the cloaca displaces the spectre and threat of male rape, which had started to be documented at this time.³⁸ In keeping with the generic prerogatives of the redemption bid, Brummell is presented as the victim here, the subject of the gaze enduring his 'penance' and 'suffering'. Brummell's function in this spectacle emblematises the ambivalent function that the dandy serves in the wider culture: on the one hand he is the marker of taste and civilisation, but on the other a scandalous potentiality hovers over this predisposition to taste and display, and preoccupation with – and self-consciousness of – corporeality.

This unsettling vignette of Brummell's 'suffering' stages the ritualised humiliation of the dandy as a marked and incarcerated body. Or rather it re-stages that ritual humiliation. For, as William Cohen points out, 'scandal is composed of two discrete moments: the first comprises the alleged event that transgresses community moral standards and is therefore hidden; the second publicly recapitulates that earlier moment, lending the scandal its narrative

form'.³⁹ We can understand this gesture of recapitulation as a form of 'degradation ceremony', the communicative work that diminishes a subject's social identity and effects a reduction in status.⁴⁰ Insofar as this ritual work is transformative, however, it can be understood as moving towards the establishment of a new identity. In that sense, it can be implicated in the form of a redemption bid. Jesse's staging of this incident as a clash of civilisations, which is at one level an encounter between Bakhtin's classical body and his carnivalesque body,⁴¹ also suggests the larger social function that the spectacle of degradation might have in clarifying the boundaries between the clean and the abject upon which such 'superior civilization' is based. It betrays the psychic investment of a civilised British culture in the revelatory spectacle of the dandy's ritual degradation: the dandiacal body as the spectacularly displayed body of decline, fall and ruin. Nothing perhaps dramatises so starkly Brummell's decline and ruin as this ironic revelatory spectacle of his desperate attempts to conceal these most basic ablutions, the only ones remaining to him. It marks so neatly and cruelly the passage from Brummell's London days when he would be openly on display at his immaculate and elaborate *toilette* to a large group of fashionable young men known as the 'Dandiacal Body', who would attend his levees to observe him performing intimate acts of grooming and ablution. Nothing suggests quite like 'such circumstances' do the extent to which Brummell's vocational dandyism had been most 'painfully interfered with'. And yet this painful interference, presented with such sympathy, is also presented as a form of punishment. After all, Jesse refers to this experience in terms of the ritual of 'penance'.

Acting as judge and jury, the scandalous memoir reminds us of the displacement of British public spectacles of punishment during the nineteenth century, after the abolition of the pillory in 1837 and the public hanging in 1868, into more vicarious spectacles of trial and punishment. These occur within a new range of genres that involve the aestheticisation of crime, such as the Newgate novel, as well as burgeoning genres of prison ethnography and criminal anthropology, all of which make their intertextual marks on Jesse's text. These vicarious spectacles are staged by the genres of the culture of celebrity. For just as the emergence of the mass media can be traced to the broadsides, ballads and crime stories that were spawned in the wake of executions, so too these genres make their atavistic mark upon the modern genres of celebrity culture, in the affective swerves they conjure, from adoration to scandalised moral outrage, as well as more nuanced yet still ambivalent modes of social affect that inform specifically scandalous forms of celebrity culture and its practices of spectatorship. It is striking that the disappearance of public hanging coincides with the emergence of

such vicarious spectacles of celebrity culture. Jesse's narrative suggests – like Hogarth's *Calais Gate* – the proximity of the prison to the stage, even in the displacement of one by the other, and in the staging of shame and rituals of degradation.

Jacqueline Rose's 'passionate ... connection between the cult of celebrity and shame' would seem to obtain here between Jesse's 'narrative of misfortunes', the staging of his 'greatest humiliation', the agony in the cloaca and this affect of *Schadenfreude*, defined by the OED as 'the malicious enjoyment of another's misfortunes'. Rose also draws attention to the 'murderousness' of celebrity affect in our contemporary culture, which suggests the displacement of the criminal onto the social celebrity, or the marked body of the dandy, as the object of such *Schadenfreude*. However, the less malicious forms of enjoyment, such as sentimental and sympathetic identification, are also the generic prerogatives of the scandalous memoir; and they are just as keenly exploited by Jesse's narrative, as in its sentimental staging of Brummell's own voice, appealing for sympathy, as Jesse interpolates first-person testimony. For, amid this decline, Jesse presents Brummell attempting to reinstantiate the social, psychic and corporeal form that has been so spectacularly lost, as he writes to friends from prison, with appeals for attention, clean clothing and good food:

Will you have the kindness to speak in a peremptory manner to those about you, if it is owing to their negligence I am to suffer these privations? I only ask for wholesome sustenance for my body, and salutary cleanliness for its outside. (*Life*, II, 228)

Pray tell my friends that I am very fond of strawberries, when they are in full season, and that they always do me good. (II, 229)

And here he is campily mimicking the actress Fanny Kemble, whose memoirs had just been published:

Do not forget *little* me. (II, 260)

The pathos of these moving appeals to form and grace and corporeal dignity – as much as for clothing and food – in the scraps of correspondence that Jesse has painstakingly collected is a world away from the puns and putdowns for which Brummell is famous, a world away from Barbey's attribution to Brummell of 'Irony', that 'gift which can dispense with all others', and which 'invests a man with a sphinx-like atmosphere which impresses the observer like a mystery and disturbs him like a danger' (Barbey, *Anatomy*, p. 33). These appeals are closer to the rustic genre of the Hogarthian progress – the request for good food a particularly piquant detail in a narrative that is replete with descriptions of bad French food, where we see Brummell 'gloat

over a beef-steak floating in bad butter and chopped onions, or swallow the coarse fat of a pig (and, be it remembered, a French pig)' (*Life*, II, 324). Here, it seems, we are returned to Calais Gate and to Hogarth's lament for the Roast Beef of Old England. An active homesickness dramatises the force of the opposition between Hogarth's two alternatives: Calais Gate or the Roast Beef of Old England.

Once out of prison, Brummell moves back to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where he draws in 'the summer tourists, in search of churches and the tapestry at Bayeux', who ply him with 'Champagne ... his favourite beverage [in return for] a few excellent stories'. "Put me opposite to Mr Brummell", was the constant request of these travellers ... The landlord, if he saw that his guests were ignorant that he had such a distinguished character in his house, never failed to make them aware of the fact: they were, however, decoyed to a capital dinner' (II, 273-4). However, it is not long before Brummell starts to fail the sociability of the establishment, as occurrences in the Hôtel d'Angleterre become increasingly like episodes of *Little Britain*. At the Caen prison Brummell had modelled an exquisite English modesty, waiting for an appropriate moment to steal over unobserved, seek intestinal relief, and maintain the appropriate distinction between food and waste. At the Hôtel d'Angleterre, Brummell starts losing control of these bodily functions and passing it off on the landlord's dog – appropriately or inappropriately enough – called Stop. In these ways, we witness the process of enculturation that Pierre Bourdieu has referred to as 'treating the body as a memory,' entrust[ing] to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e. mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture.⁴² Or rather, we witness this process in reverse, in the form of a loss of bodily memory, through the silhouette of abjection, as Brummell's syphilitic condition worsens. Brummell writes to Mr Armstrong, his grocer and friend, 'I represented the abject condition of my linen to you' (*Life*, II, 301). And Mr Armstrong writes to another unidentified friend, 'still we cannot keep him *clean*' (II, 329). The ultimate degradation is the movement from Brummell's famed 'extreme cleanliness' to filth, from Beau to 'beau-nasty', defined in the 1811 *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* as 'a slovenly fop; one finely-dressed but dirty'.

Brummell is moved further and further away from the public space of the *table d'hôte*, before being forcibly removed from the Hotel to the Bon Sauveur asylum, the ultimate irony-free zone. The Bon Sauveur is run by Catholic sisters of charity, who undertake the Enlightened care of inmates comprising the deaf and dumb, and the male and female insane. Here, Brummell finds peace with the nuns. As with the Hogarthian progress, the

dandy rake moves from prison to Bedlam. Brummell eventually dies under the care of a sole sister of Charity. This wily old nun claims to have performed upon Brummell a deathbed conversion by getting him to repeat after her an act of contrition – 'I requested him to repeat after me the *acte de contrition* of the Roman ritual, as in our prayer-books. He immediately consented, and repeated after me, in an earnest manner ... that form of prayer' (II, 351). Whether or not the 'earnest manner' is fanciful Popish embroidery on the nun's part, we do not know. Jesse is sceptical, and declines to accept that Brummell's participation in the Roman ritual furnishes evidence of a new-found spirituality, arguing (quite plausibly) that it suggests rather a moment of heightened awareness of his want of religion. Jesse is hopeful though that 'yielding to the nun's persuasion' was not just the wanderings of a 'ruined intellect' (II, 352) and that it might be understood as a 'tribute' to the Almighty in lieu of being able to remember a prayer of 'his own church' (II, 353). It is here then perhaps that Jesse's *Life* most clearly resembles Gagnier's 'Victorian morality tale', paying homage to, if not ultimately securing, the deathbed conversion that is a staple of the genre. After the deathbed scene, Jesse's *Life* imports a providential account and heightens the sententious tones of the decline-and-fall narrative, invoking the Decadent Roman setting of Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) to provide the *mise-en-scène* for an allegory of Regency London as Decadent Rome, casting a moralising backward look at Brummell at the height of his fame and power and glamour in London.⁴³ It is moralising, yet supple enough to accommodate the complex forms of affective identification and disidentification that mark scandalous celebrity culture and its affective repertoire of sensation. For the rise-and-fall narrative is plotted to elicit both affective modes of the constitutive ambivalence that marks celebrity culture.

As I've suggested above, Jesse's *Life* clearly resembles Gagnier's 'Victorian morality tale' at this point. However, the sententious yet sensational summing up is the generic prerogative of the scandalous memoir, which offers an admission of guilt while offering a defence. One of the ways Jesse does this is by blaming Brummell's former friend, George IV, for corrupting Brummell with copious draughts of 'luscious alcohol'. The backstory to this is Brummell's well-known reference to George IV as Lord Alvanley's 'fat friend', which led to a spectacular falling out between George IV and Brummell that climaxed in George IV's avoiding of Brummell on a trip to Calais. When Jesse met Brummell in early 1832, Brummell had taken to carrying a brown silk umbrella with the head of George IV as its handle. As Jesse notes drolly of this 'effigy', 'it was not flattering; perhaps, the more

prized by Brummell on that account' (II, 81). And perhaps in honour of that, Jesse features George's shrunken voodoo head in the portrait as frontispiece to Volume I of *The Life* (Fig. 7.2). Another way Jesse defends Brummell is by contrasting Brummell as a mere devotee of pleasure with the Marquis of Hertford, an extraordinary cruel libertine and Regency root-rat of Brummell's social set, who also died in 1840. Brummell's life, says Jesse in his defence, 'though not one of licentiousness, had certainly been devoted to pleasure' (II, 364).

But there is also another ending that Jesse stages an earlier, figurative death of Brummell that is identified with the dissolution of his tie:

His tie, the one, the only one, that he had clung to with affection all his life, was now dissolved; and Brummell may be figuratively said to have expired that day – starch and cambric had become to him matters of history. I am very sorry it is not in my power to give those of his admirers who are curious in chronology the exact date on which this startling incident took place. The decayed and diminished state of his wardrobe, that he had now no prospect of replenishing, was probably an additional reason for such a dereliction of former principles; for, judging by the next and last note that I was able to collect of the unfortunate Beau's, it is very likely that his superfine cambric cravats, those that were possibly the gift of his friend King Allen, had now become mere visions of the past. (II, 300–1)

From this point on, Brummell wears what was once unthinkable – 'a black silk handkerchief' (II, 300) – and the dandy regimen of clean white linen is over. Thus Jesse's narrative stages the final moment in the rise, decline and fall of Brummell's superfine white linen cravat – the signature fashion accessory with which Brummell blazed onto the London social stage in 1798 – here fallen and disintegrated and usurped by black silk. In the absence of clean white linen, 'Brummell may be figuratively said to have expired that day' – his vocational dandyism and very identity predicated on an abundance of starched linen ties that can no longer be 'replenished'.

EPHEMERAL ENDURANCE

The town of Caen, where Brummell died in 1840, is the Norman town where the French Catholic Royalist Jules Barbey D'Aureville was born in 1808. In 1845, the year after Jesse's *Life*, Barbey published the *Anatomy of Dandyism*.⁴⁴ A major difference between the Jesse and Barbey narratives is in the treatment of exile, ruin and abjection, as Barbey himself demonstrates in a pointed rhetorical question:

Captain Jesse has counted the total of these humiliations and sorrows; we will keep silence. Why should they be recounted? It is the Dandy we are studying,

his influence, his public life, his social role ... At the Bon Sauveur Hospital [Brummell's] attacks were less touching. His illness grew worse and took on a character of degradation which seemed to be a vengeance for the elegance of his life. It is impossible to relate any of this. (*Anatomy*, pp. 59, 61)

Barbey's rhetorical question stages a refusal to recount Brummell's abjection. Where Jesse's *Life* participates in an extraordinary spectacularisation of 'the Dandiacal body', and its 'humiliations and sorrows', narrativising this spectacle of defeat and ruination, Barbey, on the other hand, transsubstantiates and displaces this spectacle into an abstraction of style, 'dandyism itself'. Barbey's 'anatomy' of dandyism is insistently a corporeal, transcending physical anatomy to apotheosise an ideal of transitoriness.

Where Jesse focuses on material details, Barbey emphasises the 'untranslatable', the *je ne sais quoi* of manners and 'milieu', a term then recently coined by Balzac in the 1842 preface to *The Human Comedy*. Barbey's memoir elaborates a rhetoric of ephemerality; it is about the stylised representation of social effects, fleeting and ephemeral events, the charms and conjurations, mysteries and rites of social bodies in space, the magic of social embodiment, the mysterious effects of 'influence'. Effect, nuance, manners and milieu are all critical terms in a new vocabulary that informs the new social genres of fashion magazines, savoir-faire manuals and treatises on fashion such as Balzac's *On Fashion (De La Mode)*, which coins the term 'modernité'.

The conventional opposition between the social Regency dandy and the literary Victorian dandy is predicated upon the absence of a textual deposit for the social dandy. The relative absence of textual deposits left by Brummell sends Jesse looking for whatever pieces of testimony and oral history anyone formerly connected with Brummell might care to give him. Barbey, on the other hand, is confident that such things are lost – remoter than classical ruins – and draws comfort from the idea that they can only be recreated through fantasy: 'Herculeum may be discovered under the ashes; but a few years heaped on the manners of a society bury it deeper than all the dust of volcanoes. Memoirs which are the history of such manners are themselves no more than anecdotes' (p. 11). The absence of textual deposits is for Barbey an opportunity for invention and the consecration of ephemerality. The Second Empire French 'literary' dandy, as distinct from the English social Regency dandy, is also a monument to the fiction of a certain kind of autonomous male subject, a certain kind of misogynist romance of corporeal transcendence that disavows precisely that breakdown, abjection, effeminacy and corporeality that Jesse traces with such unsparing if unsightly detail. Barbey recodes and resurrects the dandy as a pure triumphant ideal, a monument – and he refers to his book as a

'statuette' – to disembodiment, cleanliness, mobility, transitoriness, the prerogative of the gaze, ironic detachment.

Barbey puts a more extravagant spin on what Jesse represented as the apparent absence of licentiousness and heterosexual plotting: '[Brummell] was not what the world calls a libertine. Richelieu [the notorious gallant in the court of Louis XV] for his part too closely imitated those Tartar conquerors who made their beds with festoons of women. Brummell claimed no such booty and trophies of victory' (p. 23). The question of Brummell and booty is a fascinating one, made more, not less, complicated by Ian Kelly's recent discovery that Brummell suffered from syphilitic dementia.⁴⁵ However, rather than seeking to adjudicate Brummell's sexual orientation, I am more interested in considering how Brummell – with or without booty – can be seen to have initiated the 'bachelor life',⁴⁶ and how Brummell as ur-bachelor comprehends the multiple ambiguities of orientation that are so critical to the fluidity and mobility of this pervasive new social and sexual form that becomes such a key topos of nineteenth-century literature, peopling the novels of Bulwer, Thackeray and Dickens, Balzac and Proust.

Of course, the most scandalous dandy of the nineteenth century – Oscar Wilde – was not a bachelor. Wilde is so shocking precisely because his emphatically homosexual dandy emerges not from the bachelor's prerogative of ambiguity but from the aegis of Victorian paterfamilias. What Wilde's celebrity demonstrated is how the dandy's power, significance and danger lies in being so radically ambiguous (or queer): for just as the dandy signifies both ornament and the absence of ornament, so too does he signify both homosexual and *not* homosexual. The dandy is a figure then not only of radical ambiguity but also of intense anxiety, eliciting identification and disidentification. Certainly, Oscar Wilde's trials cultivated both a baleful *Schadenfreude* and what Sedgwick has referred to as 'identification through a spectatorial route'.⁴⁷ Even today the dandy can be just as much a style-fancying heterosexual as a signifier of a queer non-normative masculinity. The dandy is a lever of ambiguity, generating a series of often opposing meanings that are radically dependent upon context.

A key word in Barbey's account of Jesse above is 'vengeance'; this suggests a providential understanding of the dandy's life, but also conveys one particular mode of affect that informs Jesse's scandalous memoir: the desire to witness the fall vicariously. Ultimately, what makes Jesse's text so productive for understanding the social functions of the dandy in the late Romantic period is the way in which these apparently archaic genres engage

contradictory modes of social affect that are also constitutive of a modern celebrity culture, in their swerves between sympathy and *Schadenfreude*, desire and disenchantment, identification and alienation. Jesse's scandalous memoir encourages the reader, quoting Nussbaum again, 'to respond sympathetically as judge and jury'.⁴⁸ It functions therefore as a trial that displays and spectacularises misfortune. The vicarious identification that is enabled by spectacle elicits sympathetic response but also, through the spectator's prerogative to swerve into disidentification and shaming, a particular form of punishment. When Brummell crossed the Channel and passed through the Calais Gate, he was also being put beyond the English social pale, and would never return. But he was also performing for that English culture a ritualised spectacle, enacting the prerogatives of the ambivalent social magic that is the culture of scandalous celebrity, putting in motion a career of both ruination and ephemeral endurance.

NOTES

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1. Captain Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, Esq., commonly called Beau Brummell*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844), I, 334. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text. Captain William Jesse was a soldier, the author of *Notes of a Half-Pay in Search of Health: or Russia, Circassia, and the Crimea in 1839–40* (London: James Madden and Co., 1841), and the translator of an unpublished manuscript in French by J. P. Ferrier, 'History of the Afghans' (1858). He met Brummell at an evening party in Caen in February 1832.
2. On dandyism and cultural crossing, see Ellen Moers, *The Dandy* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960).
3. I thank Gillian Russell for this formulation.
4. Quoted in Rosalind H. Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 125.
5. Jacqueline Rose, 'The Cult of Celebrity', *New Formations* 36 (1999), 9.
6. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1961; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 27.
7. Jesse's narrative makes no mention of Brummell's syphilis, and presents Brummell's breakdown under the general sign of ruination. Such discretion is

- hardly surprising, and is, for the time, a matter of good taste. Brummell's recent biographer, Ian Kelly, is able to demonstrate conclusively from his examination of Brummell's medical records at the Bon Sauveur that Brummell suffered from tertiary syphilis. He concludes that Brummell must have known he had the condition from 1816, and argues that he had been receiving treatment for it during the 1820s and early 1830s, when it started to attack his brain. See Ian Kelly, *Beau Brummell: The Ultimate Dandy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), esp. pp. 413–15, 421–2, 448–50, 457–61.
8. *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Scolar Press, 1986), p. 69.
 9. Felicity Nussbaum, 'Heteroclitics: The Scandalous Memoirs', *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 180, 181.
 10. Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion, 2001), p. 88.
 11. See my 'Tainted Love and Romantic Literary Celebrity', *ELH* 74.1 (Spring 2007), esp. 78.
 12. On masculine dress and the French Revolution, see Lynn Hunt, "Freedom of Dress in Revolutionary France," in *From the Royal to the Republican Body: Incorporating the Political in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 224–49, and Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearance: Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Berg, 2002). The reform of masculine dress that occurs with the onset of industrialisation has been referred to, in its most influential formulation, as 'The Great Masculine Renunciation', by J. C. Flügel in *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), pp. 110ff. It has also been implicated within the larger process that Richard Sennett has referred to in his eponymous work *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977).
 13. 'Character of a Macaroni', *Town and Country Magazine* 4 (May 1772), 243. My thanks to Caitlyn Lehmann for drawing my attention to this article.
 14. William Hazlitt, 'Brummelliana', *Selected Writings*, ed. Jon Cook (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 160.
 15. As such, it offers an early example of the cultural biography of things. Here I draw on Arjun Appadurai's distinction between the cultural biography of things (specific objects) and the social history of things (types of objects or objects as a whole), elaborated in 'The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective', Introduction to *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).
 16. On dandyism and the detail, see Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*, trans. Andy Stafford, ed. Andy Stafford and Michael Carter (London: Berg, 2005), p. 67.
 17. Quoted in Moers, *The Dandy*, p. 24.
 18. On 'the art of rising', see review of Jesse's *Life*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* LV (June 1844), 771.
 19. Jules Barbey D'Aureville, *The Anatomy of Dandyism, with some Observations on Beau Brummell* (1845), trans. D. B. Wyndham Lewis (London: Peter Davies,

- 1928), p. 6. Subsequent references will be to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the text.
20. 'Faro's Daughters: Female Gamesters, Politics, and the Discourse of Finance in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33.4 (2000), p. 481.
21. Stephen Turner, 'Charisma Reconsidered', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 3 (2000), 1. This insouciance also explains Brummell's appeal for French Second Empire bohemian dandies such as Gautier, Barbey and Baudelaire, in their fierce resistance to bourgeois habits of financial accumulation and accountability.
22. Lord Glenburvie to his son Frederick. Quoted in Kelly, *Beau Brummell*, pp. 344 and 348. 'Dowager' means both 'a widow with a title derived from her late husband' and 'a dignified elderly woman' (OED). [o]
23. Quoted in Lewis Melville, *Beau Brummell: His Life and Letters* (London, 1924), p. 165.
24. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 71.
25. Here, Brummell would seem to be drawing on a pun created in his honour at the height of his heady London days, when it was customary to refer to the bow window at White's club in front of which Brummell sat as the 'Beau' window. See Kelly, *Beau Brummell*, p. 245.
26. Before its life as the frontispiece, the image had been presented by Brummell to Aimable, the daughter of his Caen landlady, with whom Brummell formed a close relationship after accepting her mother's invitation to be her English tutor, and who was at that time seventeen years of age to Brummell's fifty-three. This relationship provides a specific context for the intense affectivity of the image, and Brummell's reference to the caption as 'ridiculous' occurs in a letter to Aimable: 'These ridiculous words were written in a moment of haste, and with no other idea than being laughed at by you ... not to be seen by others' (*Life*, II, 288).
27. Homi Bhabha, 'On Global Memory: Speculations on Barbaric Transmission', lecture delivered at the University of Melbourne, 17 January 2008.
28. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963; New York: Touchstone, 1986), p. 2. That Goffman's father was a tailor seems fitting for the great theorist of social presentation, symbolic interaction and the 'sociology of occasions'. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (New York: Anchor, 1967), p. 2. It might also explain Goffman's sensitivity to such shaming encounters as the inability to pay the tailor's bill.
29. Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 43.
30. Pierre Rivière's case was reported in the *Annales d'hygiène Publique et de Médecine Légale* in 1836. The archival records discovered by Foucault included a memoir by Rivière, remarkable on account of being written by a barely literate subject. The memoir was published as *I, Pierre Rivière, having Slaughtered my Mother, my Sister, and my Brother ... A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, ed. Michel Foucault, trans. Frank Jellinek (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1975). The fact that Rivière had penned a memoir might explain

- why he didn't part with the 'dreadful tale' that Brummell was hoping to wrest from him.
31. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 69.
 32. Lytton, Preface to the edition of 1840, *Paul Clifford* (1830; London: Walter Scott, Ltd. n.d.), p. iii.
 33. 'Retenue' means restraint, self-control, and usually refers to the social behaviour of delicate or bourgeois people, but it also means to 'hold on' when one needs to 'go' but can't. While the ambiguity of the French pronoun 'on' (which also translates as 'we') enables us to read this as the direct account of a prison eyewitness, I read this quotation to represent Jesse quoting informally from a letter by Brummell which reports the comments of his companions, processing them through a more refined filter. My thanks to Adam Russell, in particular, and to Pascale Baelde, for generous assistance with this translation.
 34. See *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). The episode also offers an example of what Erving Goffman refers to as the regime of 'contaminative exposure' that obtains in 'total institutions' such as prisons, hospitals and asylums, and which 'involves a breakdown of the usual environmental arrangements for insulating oneself from one's own source of contamination, as in having to ... subject one's evacuation to regimentation' (*Asylums*, p. 33).
 35. The title of Chapter X of Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833-4), which Ellen Moers reads as 'the Victorian epitaph of the Regency dandy', *Dandy*, p. 178.
 36. For an account of a twentieth-century scandal of the public toilet and effeminising anality, see Lee Edelman, 'Tearooms and Sympathy; or, The Epistemology of the Water Closet', in *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), esp. p. 169.
 37. 'Les Chevaliers de la Giurlande: Cellmates in Restoration France', *Journal of Homosexuality* 41 (2001), 133.
 38. Here I follow Sedgwick's preference for the term 'male rape' as distinct from 'homosexual rape', in recognition of the fact that men who rape men are not necessarily homosexual by self-attribution or by habitual sexual practice, and in order to avoid the homophobic connotations of the latter term. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 225, n. 6.
 39. *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 8.
 40. For the original ethnomethodological formulation, see Harold Garfinkel, 'Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (1956), 420-4. In an interesting reworking of this concept for celebrity culture (though it doesn't cite the original), Chris Rojek reads degradation ceremonies as 'traumatiz[ing] the relationship between celebrities and fans because they reveal a schism between the public face and the veridical self' (*Celebrity*, p. 87).

41. For a brilliant parlaying of Bakhtin, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's classic study of geographical and corporeal transcodings, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), esp. pp. 6-19.
42. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 94.
43. Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* was read by contemporaries as an allegory of Regency London, offering what J. G. A. Pocock has called 'the very fashionable, almost radical-chic, parallel between contemporary Britain or Europe and Sallustian or Tacitean Rome' (*Virtue, Commerce, History*, p. 149), a view that Gibbon was at pains to challenge with his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). Such a Regency radical-chic view was a staple of the silverfork novel, which commemorated the exiled Brummell in works such as Benjamin Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826-7), Thomas Lister's *Granby* (1826), Bulwer's *Pelham* (1828), Theodore Hook's *Sayings and Doings* (1824-8), written in the Shire Lane debtors' prison, and William Maginn's *Whitehall, or the Days of George IV* (1827). Indeed, Jesse quotes (without attribution) Catherine Gore's *Cecil, or the Adventures of a Coxcomb* (1841) on the 'frothing of *cocculus indicus*' (II, 371).
44. This text, together with Balzac's *Treatise of the Elegant Life* (1833), initiates the French cult of the dandy that is associated with the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe, descendant of Louis XIII, and king of France from 1830 to 1848, before the establishment of the short-lived Second Republic of 1848, and before the Second Empire of Napoleon III (1852-70).
45. As Kelly himself notes, this discovery certainly complicates the standard assumptions that Brummell was asexual, though it does not settle the question of sexual preference, given that the condition might not have been contracted through heterosexual transmission. See Kelly, *Beau Brummell*, pp. 310-12.
46. A contemporary reviewer of Jesse's *Life* writes that after Brummell left the army, he 'now commenced what is called the bachelor life in England; he took a house in Chesterfield Street, May Fair; gave small but exquisite dinners; invited men of rank, and even the Prince, to his table; and voiding extravagance - for he seldom played [wrong] and kept only a pair of horses - established himself as a refined voluptuary' (*Blackwood's*, 773).
47. *Epistemology*, p. 151.
48. Nussbaum, 'Heteroclitics: Scandalous Memoirs', p. 181.



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